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28 August 1981*Offer Declined—They Might Have Been Killed***Libyans Sought California Bomb Experts**

By MIKE GOODMAN and WILLIAM C. REMPEL, Times Staff Writers

Libyan agents tried to recruit about 30 California-area bomb experts for a terrorist training center in Tripoli, but the Americans refused when intelligence sources warned that they might never come back alive, The Times has learned.

One of those experts—Sgt. Arleigh McCree, head of the Los Angeles Police Department bomb squad—said he was taken to dinner at Escoffier Restaurant in Beverly Hills in 1977 by two Libyans who said they represented the government of strongman Col. Moammar Kadhafi.

"They offered me \$140,000—\$70,000 down and \$70,000 in trust," McCree said. "They wanted me to be a team leader and recruit the rest of my guys."

Doubts About Their Mission

McCree said each member of his five-man team would get \$100,000. Their mission, the Libyans told him, would be to disarm unexploded bombs and mines near a vacated American military base.

But McCree and other Americans approached by the Libyans were warned by U.S. intelligence sources that the real plan was to have the recruited Americans train terrorists and make bombs for use by terrorists. Informed of the plan, McCree refused.

"Now, I'm a patriotic guy and my government told me they'd rather I not do it," he explained.

"Then they told me I'm liable to get killed—which was an even more compelling reason."

McCree is angry, however, about the American bomb experts who did accept the Libyan offer and who have since supplied the Libyans with explosive materials and helped to train terrorists to use them. He is particularly concerned that some of those students of terrorism could bring their deadly skills to Los Angeles for the 1984 Olympics.

"What those (American bomb experts) taught the Libyans could damn-well cost some of my people their lives in the next Olympics," McCree said. "We've got enough problems. We don't need our best people teach-

ing terrorists how to be better terrorists."

Capt. Ted Perez of the Ontario Fire Department, another West-Coast bomb expert approached for the Libyan assignment in 1977, was sought out by a fellow American—an area bomb expert whom Perez refused to identify. The recruiter offered him \$100,000, with half to be paid in advance.

Perez said he and most of the other 30 bomb experts "got our heads together" and investigated the Libyan offer.

"We found out it wasn't kosher," he said. "We might start out clearing minefields, but we would be pulled into clandestine activities."

The American recruiter was "trying to sell all of us in the area," Perez recalled.

"It was a lot of money—I had to think about it," he conceded.

But Mrs. Perez said she didn't have to think about it. "The money's no good if he's dead," she said. "I knew if he ever went to Libya he would never come back."